

News Release

Senator Pete V. Domenici

DOMENICI'S "ACCESS" RADIO SHOW

Questions & Answers With New Mexico Radio Journalists

TO TAPE THE SHOW, CALL TOLL-FREE

1-800-545-1267 ext. 309

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Record Senator Pete Domenici's "ACCESS" radio news conference, recorded Monday, July 17, 2000, by calling 1-800-545-1267 and entering extension 309. Please call the Domenici press office for assistance: 202-224-7082.

PARTICIPANTS: Leslie Clark, KUNM Albuquerque
 John McBreen, KYVA Gallup
 Bob Clark, KRSN Los Alamos
 Mike Kissling, KBCQ Roswell
 Don Pace, KNMX Las Vegas
 Jim Roper, KRTN Raton

TOPICS: Management of National Labs Under Gen. Gorton
 Water Availability for Navajo-Gallup Water Pipeline Project
 Too Much Domenici Power Over DOE & Labs?
 Repeal of Marriage Tax Penalty
 Rio Grade Water Priorities & Federal Government Takeover Prospects
 Habitat Rehabilitation Funding on Rio Grande
 Should U.S. Leave the United Nations?
 Trustees for Baca Ranch Management
 Israeli-Palestinian Accord at Camp David
 Update on FBI Investigation of Hard Drive Misplacement at LANL
 FEMA Cerro Grande Compensation Office

DETAILS:

00:00 Domenici says Congress, the administration and the existing bureaucracy at the Energy Department need to give General John Gordon the time and resources to implement the **National Nuclear Security Administration** (NNSA) and its management reforms over the nuclear weapons complex. Domenici reviews the history of forming the NNSA and the outlook for changes at the national laboratories in terms of security and management.

05:00 Domenici says he has supported the **Navajo-Gallup water pipeline** proposal

- under the presumption that there would be enough water available to make the project a success in terms of bringing water to Navajo Nation villages and the city of Gallup. He looks forward to the completion of the feasibility study on the project.
- 08:09 Domenici says he has not made a **“power grab” over DOE operations**, but that his seniority in the Senate has placed him in a position to have influence over congressional oversight over DOE and its national laboratories. He says the implementation of the NNSA and other reforms have required bipartisan support and verification in Congress, the administration and outside experts.
- 12:22 Domenici says the Senate and House have passed a repeal to the federal death taxes and that President Clinton will have to explain to the American people why he believes the federal government should be confiscating a family’s assets when someone dies. He also says the Republican-controlled Congress will continue to pass legislation despite obstructive moves by Democrats and veto threats from the president.
- 14:41 Domenici says the Senate will this week pass a repeal to the **Marriage Penalty Tax**, which he termed as “being close to an immoral activity on the part of the federal government.” He says it makes no sense to penalize a couple for getting married. He adds that a presidential veto of this tax relief measure would only underscore the need to have a Republican president in the White House.
- 16:40 Domenici says nothing would please him more than to have all parties reach a resolution on **water use on the Rio Grande** that meets everyone’s needs, including those of the silvery minnow. He expresses criticism of the Interior Department’s recent attempts to overrun New Mexico water laws and water rights.
- 16:40 Domenici says a federal court hearing next Monday will address whether it is right to expect the Rio Grande to be a **“wet river” all year round**. Based on his history in Albuquerque, he says he knows the river occasionally ran dry during some seasons. He says he is willing to work with Interior Secretary Bruce Babbitt to resolve the situation, but that he will maintain his legislation to prohibit the federalization of water law in terms of the Middle Rio Grande Conservancy District and the Fort Sumner Irrigation District.
- 2:27 Domenici says that as chairman of the Senate Energy and Water Development Appropriations Subcommittee he has supported millions in federal support for **habitat rehabilitation on the Rio Grande**, including \$14.8 million for FY2001 for such things as habitat restoration, water acquisition and river management.
- 22:23 Domenici says that while he has problems with some **United Nations activities**, he does not believe the United States should withdraw from the international body.
- 24:44 Domenici says New Mexicans who believe they have the qualifications to serve on the **Baca Ranch board of trustees** that will manage the property should contact his office or those of other members of the New Mexico congressional delegation.
- 26:28 Domenici says the ongoing **Israeli-Palestinian peace talks** at Camp David are a worthwhile endeavor, and that he hopes an accord can be reached. He says he understands how difficult the talks must be, but that he has “a hunch” there will be some positive outcome from them.
- 27:59 Domenici says he has not been briefed on the status of the FBI investigation on the once **misplaced secret hard drives** at Los Alamos National Laboratory.

28:31 Domenici says he is looking forward to the Federal Emergency Management Agency establishing the **Cerro Grande Claims Office** in order to begin compensating homeowners who lost their homes in May's Cerro Grande Fire. He says he is pleased that Congress had such an "unusual and rapid" response to this northern New Mexico blaze.